	Type	L #	Hits	Search Text	DBs	Time Stamp
1	BRS	L1	8534	(postage or frank or franked or franking or mail or mailing or shipping) near5 (indicia or indicium or mark or marking or stamp or stamping or impression or imprint)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:23
2	BRS	L11	793	1 near5 (text or logo or ad or advertise or advertising or advertisement or message or graphic or graphical or greeting or slogan or inscription)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:37
3	BRS	L12	521	1 near5 (picture or image or photo or photograph)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:37
4	BRS	L13	161	1 near5 (custom or customize or customized or customizing or customization or personal or personalize or personalized or personalizing or personalization)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:37
5	BRS	L14	89	11 same 12	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:38
6	BRS	L15	746126	(remote or remotely or central or centrally or center) near5 (net or network or lan or wan or internet or intranet or communications or line or link or channel)	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:38

	Type	L #	Hits	Search Text	DBs	Time Stamp
7	BRS	L16	34	1 near5 15	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:39
8	BRS	L17	3	(13 or 14) and 16	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:39
9	BRS	L18	273	13 or 14 or 16 or 17 Scanned Ti, Ab, Kwic all	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB	2004/12/29 13:43
10	BRS	L19	53	("11249205" or "20020017782" or "2002001783" or "20020089172" or "20020093568" or "6503329" or "6672623" or "5471925" or "5822738" or "5923406" or "5978781" or "6005945" or "6141654" or "6085126").pn. or ((@pd<="19710101" not @pd<="19470101") and (101/71 or 283/71 or 705/401 or 705/408 or 705/410).ccls.) Scanned Ti	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWENT; IBM_TDB all	2004/12/29 14:08

	Document ID	Issue Date	Inventor	Current OR	Current XRef	Pages
1	US 5343386 A	19940830	Barber; Pamela L.	700/90	396/2; 708/101	16
2	US 5423573 A	19950613	de Passille; Georges	283/71	283/81; 40/638	7
3	EP 893787 A2	19990127	BRASINGTON, GLYNN M et al.			13
4	US 5873605 A	19990223	Kaplan; Kenneth	283/71		5
5	US 5923406 A	19990713	Brasington; Glynn M. et al.	355/40	355/27	12
6	JP 11249205 A	19990917	KIKUCHI, YUKIO			4
7	WO 9960551 A1	19991125	BRAMSTEDT, GARY CHARLES et al.			25
8	WO 200024590 A	20000504	TRUC, J A			13
9	JP 2000343900 A	20001212	OSHIMA, HIROYUKI			7
10	EP 1077435 A1	20010221	PATTON, DAVID L et al.			33
11	JP 2001109380 A	20010420				4
12	JP 2001118003 A	20010427	PATTON, DAVID L et al.			67
13	US 20020017783 A1	20020214	Patton, David L. et al.	283/71		15
14	US 20020017782 A1	20020214	Patton, David L. et al.	283/71		18
15	US 20020033598 A1	20020321	Beasley, Joe Pat	283/71		8
16	US 20020046195 A1	20020418	Martin, James D.L. et al.	705/401		28

L18 results

	Document ID	Issue Date	Inventor	Current OR	Current XRef	Pages
17	US 20020089172 A1	20020711	Patton, David L. et al.	283/71		18
18	US 20020093568 A1	20020718	Chumbley, Gregory R.	348/207.99	348/143	11
19	US 20020149195 A1	20021017	BEASLEY, JOE PAT	283/71		8
20	US 6503329 B2	20030107	Patton; David L. et al.	118/669	101/371; 118/46; 283/71; 347/2	13
21	US 20030140017 A1	20030724	Patton, David L. et al.	705/410	705/408	32
22	US 6672623 B2	20040106	Patton; David L. et al.	283/71	229/68.1; 229/92.8; 283/116; 283/67; 40/638; 705/408; D19/3	13
23	US 20040254898 A1	20041216	Parker, Peter et al.	705/402		7

L18 results

	Document ID	Issue Date	Inventor	Current OR	Current XRef	Pages
1	JP 11249205 A	19990917	KIKUCHI, YUKIO			4
2	US 6672623 B2	20040106	Patton; David L. et al.	283/71	229/68.1; 229/92.8; 283/116; 283/67; 40/638; 705/408; D19/3	13
3	US 6503329 B2	20030107	Patton; David L. et al.	118/669	101/371; 118/46; 283/71; 347/2	13
4	US 6141654 A	20001031	Heiden; Richard W. et al.	705/408	235/375; 705/401; 705/410	11
5	US 6085126 A	20000704	Mellgren, III; Edmund M. et al.	700/233	700/232; 715/506	34
6	US 6005945 A	19991221	Whitehouse; Harry T.	380/51		25
7	US 5978781 A	19991102	Sansone; Ronald P.	705/408	101/71; 283/71; 705/402	32
8	US 5923406 A	19990713	Brasington; Glynn M. et al.	355/40	355/27	12
9	US 5471925 A	19951205	Heinrich; Klaus et al.	101/91	705/408; 705/410	8
10	US 20020093568 A1	20020718	Chumbley, Gregory R.	348/207.99	348/143	11
11	US 20020089172 A1	20020711	Patton, David L. et al.	283/71		18

L19 results

	Document ID	Issue Date	Inventor	Current OR	Current XRef	Pages
12	US 20020017782 A1	20020214	Patton, David L. et al.	283/71		18

L19 results

PUB-NO: EP000893787A2
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: EP 893787 A2
TITLE: Personal postage stamp vending machine
PUBN-DATE: January 27, 1999
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	COUNTRY
BRASINGTON, GLYNN M	JP
PINTSOV, LEON A	US
SHAPIRO, STEVEN J	US

INT-CL (IPC): G07F017/26, G07B017/00
EUR-CL (EPC): G07B017/00 ; G07B017/00, G07F017/26 , G07F017/42

ABSTRACT:

CHG DATE=19990905 STATUS=O> A vending machine system for printing postage stamps, the vending machine system includes an enclosed housing having a front panel with an aperture therein; a camera, mounted in the housing, for receiving through the aperture an image of at least one person and for creating an electronic image of the at least one person based on the received image of the at least one person; a printer; a payment receiving device for accepting payment and for providing a payment signal indicative that payment has been made; a computer including a memory, the computer 1) causing the camera to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image. <IMAGE>

PAT-NO: JP411249205A
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: JP 11249205 A
TITLE: PERSONAL POSTAGE STAMP PRINTING METHOD AND PRINTING SHEET USED FOR THIS PRINTING METHOD
PUBN-DATE: September 17, 1999
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	COUNTRY
KIKUCHI, YUKIO	N/A

INT-CL (IPC): G03B015/00, G09F003/00 , G11B023/38

ABSTRACT:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a personal postage stamp printing method and a printing sheet used for this printing method enabling a purchaser to personally select the figure, design, photograph, and the like of postage stamps so as to be the own memorial stamps of the purchaser while being able to specify the purchaser.

SOLUTION: A printing sheet 1 comprises a separator 2 and a plurality of seals 3A for personal postage stamps removably fitted to the separator 2. The amount of money 6 and the name of an organ 7 with authority of issuance are previously printed on the seal 3A. A person who purchased the printing sheet 1 prints desirably on a plurality of seals 3A for personal postage stamps and takes the individual seals 3A off to use them as postage stamps.

COPYRIGHT: (C)1999,JPO

PUB-NO: WO009960551A1
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: WO 9960551 A1
TITLE: PERSONALISED STAMPS
PUBN-DATE: November 25, 1999
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	COUNTRY
BRAMSTEDT, GARY CHARLES	AU
MCDOUGALL, ROSS	AU

INT-CL (IPC): G09F003/00, G09F003/02
EUR-CL (EPC): G09F003/00

ABSTRACT:

CHG DATE=20000103 STATUS=O>Postage stamps (3) are produced which enable individual personalisation with an image chosen by a person wishing to use the postage stamp (3). Each stamp has a primary area (9) on which an official stamp image required for postal validation is applied. Each stamp (3) also has a secondary area (11) where a personalising image can be applied. The personalising image can be any image and in one example can comprise the face of a person applying the stamp (3) to a postal article. The personalising image in the secondary area (11) is applied as a second printing process to the stamp (3). Each stamp (3) is produced in a sheet of stamps and can be separated from the sheet for applying to the postal article so that the stamp contains both the primary area (9) and the secondary area (11).

DERWENT-ACC-NO: 2000-365077
DERWENT-WEEK: 200273
COPYRIGHT 2004 DERWENT INFORMATION LTD
TITLE: Personalized postage stamp production method for mail, involves printing photograph on stamp blanks based on produced digital image data so that stamp contains photograph along with required indicia
INVENTOR: TRUC, J A
PRIORITY-DATA: 1998US-0179229 (October 26, 1998)
PATENT-FAMILY:

PUB-NO	PUB-DATE	LANGUAGE	PAGES	MAIN-IPC
JP 2002528755 W	September 3, 2002	N/A	015	G09F 003/00
WO 200024590 A1	May 4, 2000	E	013	B41M005/035
BR 9913605 A	June 5, 2001	N/A	000	B41M005/035
EP 1152903 A1	November 14, 2001	E	000	B41M005/035

INT-CL (IPC): B41M005/035, B41M005/38 , G09F003/00

ABSTRACTED-PUB-NO: WO 200024590A

BASIC-ABSTRACT:

NOVELTY - Photographic image (30) is printed on the stamp blanks containing indicia (28) such as country of origin and denomination based on the produced digital image data so that the postage stamp contains photographic image together with the required indicia.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION - An INDEPENDENT CLAIM is also included for personalized postage stamp.

USE - For producing photographic image for affixing to mail in accordance to notified occasions such as graduation, wedding, birthday, new baby, good wishes for holiday, show off new car, pet, house.

ADVANTAGE - Allows personalizing of postage stamps by incorporating individual photos in the stamps and enables to remove the stamp blank easily from the web.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - The figure shows the enlarged side view of stamp blank.
Indicia 28
Photographic image 30

PAT-NO: JP02000343900A
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: JP 2000343900 A
TITLE: POSTAGE STAMP
PUBN-DATE: December 12, 2000
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	COUNTRY
OSHIMA, HIROYUKI	N/A

INT-CL (IPC): B44F001/12, G09F003/00

ABSTRACT:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a postage stamp on which a personal information can be provided and simultaneously having a forgery preventing function.

SOLUTION: A publisher name M, for example, 'Japan mail', and the postage A (charge for postage stamp) are printed on a postage stamp paper T, and an area, on which a design such as a person, a flower, an animal or the like is printed in a conventional stamp, is left as a blank area F, and a sender (or a postage stamp purchaser) can write a personal message or the like, or stick a photograph image for a 'Print club' or the like on the blank area F of the postage stamp so that personal information can be written therein. On the other hand, for the postage A a forgery preventing function is provided by printing or the like to prevent an unfair reproduction.

COPYRIGHT: (C)2000,JPO

PUB-NO: EP001077435A1
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: EP 1077435 A1
TITLE: System for customizing and ordering personalized postage stamps
PUBN-DATE: February 21, 2001
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	COUNTRY
PATTON, DAVID L	US
TSAUR, ALLEN K	US

INT-CL (IPC): G07F017/26, G07B017/00
EUR-CL (EPC): G07B017/00 ; G07B017/00, G07F017/26 , G07F017/42

ABSTRACT:

CHG DATE=20010403 STATUS=O>&ORDF;&ORDF;&ORDF;&ORDF;A system and method for customizing and ordering an official postal product. The system includes a central authorizing computer system for communicating with at least one remote ordering system over a communication network. The central authorizing computer system having a computer program for forwarding information to the at least one remote ordering system for allowing customizing of an image for use in an official postal product from the at least one remote ordering system. <IMAGE>

DERWENT-ACC-NO: 2001-377675
DERWENT-WEEK: 200140
COPYRIGHT 2004 DERWENT INFORMATION LTD
TITLE: Stamp for mail, has blank space on which image or character can be printed
PRIORITY-DATA: 1999JP-0324498 (October 8, 1999)
PATENT-FAMILY:

PUB-NO	PUB-DATE	LANGUAGE	PAGES	MAIN-IPC
JP 2001109380 A	April 20, 2001	N/A	004	G09F 003/00

INT-CL (IPC): G09F003/00, G09F003/02

ABSTRACTED-PUB-NO: JP2001109380A

BASIC-ABSTRACT:

NOVELTY - The stamp (1) is provided with a blank space (2) which is used for printing an image or a character. The image or the character is printed on the blank space so that the stamp can be personalized.

USE - For mail.

ADVANTAGE - Enables the user to personalize the stamp he is going to use in order to mail his letters. Enables the stamp to advertise products and enterprise names. Enables printing an image or a character on the blank space of the stamp easily.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - The figure shows the front elevation view of the stamp. (Drawing includes non-English language text). (Drawing includes non-English language text).
Stamp 1
Blank space 2

PAT-NO: JP02001118003A
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: JP 2001118003 A
TITLE: SYSTEM FOR CUSTOMIZING AND ORDERING PERSONALIZED POSTAGE STAMPS
PUBN-DATE: April 27, 2001
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	COUNTRY
PATTON, DAVID L	N/A
TSAUR, ALLEN K	N/A

INT-CL (IPC): G06F017/60

ABSTRACT:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide a system and a method for customizing and ordering an official postal product.

SOLUTION: This system includes a computer system for centeral duchorizing computer which communicates with at least one remote ordering system in a communication network. This computer system has a computer program which fo information to the remote ordering system so as to customerize an image to be used in an official postal product from the remote ordering system.

COPYRIGHT: (C)2001,JPO

US-PAT-NO: 5343386

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5343386 A

TITLE: Apparatus for making electronically-produced postcards and method of operating same

DATE-ISSUED: August 30, 1994

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Barber; Pamela L.	Del Mar	CA	N/A	N/A

US-CL-CURRENT: 700/90, 396/2 , 708/101

ABSTRACT: An apparatus housed in a booth for automatically producing printed postcards incorporating a self-portrait of the user integrated into a pictorial background including a cash-receiving device, a computer triggered by cash received in the device, a video camera in the booth to view the user, a video monitor on which the video camera image of the user is displayed, a series of pictorial backgrounds in digitized electronic form stored in the computer for selective withdrawal therefrom by the user to be integrated with their image and a printer for obtaining the integrated user's pose and pictorial background and printing it on a postcard for immediate use.

29 Claims, 12 Drawing figures

Exemplary Claim Number: 1

Number of Drawing Sheets: 8

---------- KWIC ---------

Detailed Description Text - DETX (18): Printer 25 is charged or filled with an inventory of precut pieces of electronic print paper 27 of the size and shape of a postcard that has printed on one side the divisions characteristically seen on a picture postcard such as a delineated area for the address, the postage stamp and a brief message. The pieces of paper are stacked or fed in printer 25 so that the printer prints the integrated images of the user and the selected background on the side opposite the preprinted areas and causes this printed, or finished, postcard to be discharged to the user. Postcard 27 produced by this invention is novel in itself in that it portrays the user integrated into the selected background with no holes or empty portions at the interface of the user and the background.

US-PAT-NO: 5423573
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5423573 A
TITLE: Composite stamp
DATE-ISSUED: June 13, 1995
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
de Passille; Georges	Hull	N/A	N/A	CA

US-CL-CURRENT: 283/71, 283/81 , 40/638

ABSTRACT: A composite stamp has two parts that are used in combination to provide the finished stamp on a piece of mail. One part bears a decorative design, and the second part bears the normal identifying postage-related information including country, denomination, etc. and also has an area on which the first part is to be adhered. Both parts have adhesive backs and may, for example, be provided in dry-peelable form on a suitable carrier substrate.

13 Claims, 6 Drawing figures
Exemplary Claim Number: 1
Number of Drawing Sheets: 3

---------- KWIC ---------

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (8): It is an object of the present invention to provide an composite postage stamp which, in addition to the stamp design as provided by the postal authority for postage purposes, also provides a means whereby the user may customize the stamp by adding thereto a further image or message.

US-PAT-NO: 5873605
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5873605 A
TITLE: Personalized postal stamp
DATE-ISSUED: February 23, 1999
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	COUNTRY
Kaplan; Kenneth	Croton on Hudson	NY	10520	N/A

US-CL-CURRENT: 283/71

ABSTRACT: A personalized postal stamp has on a back surface thereof an adhesive layer for adhering the stamp to a letter or postal card, and on a front surface thereof first and second regions. The first region presents an image of indicia qualifying the stamp as a lawful stamp of a given postage denomination, and the second region, which is substantially disposed within the first region, presents an image of a person who purchased the stamp from a vending machine. The front surface is of unitary, one-piece and integral construction. The first and second region images are formed either simultaneously in a single operation or at different times by different operations.
6 Claims, 5 Drawing figures
Exemplary Claim Number: 1
Number of Drawing Sheets: 1

---------- KWIC ---------

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (6): Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a personalized postage stamp which may be more acceptable to the postal authorities than the prior art personalized postage stamp concepts.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (10): To summarize, the present invention provides a personalized postage stamp which may be more acceptable to the postal authorities than the prior art personalized postage stamp concepts because it would not lend itself to unlawful reuse after receipt of a cancellation imprint. The present invention further provides a method of making such a stamp and a vending machine for making and selling such a stamp.

US-PAT-NO: 5923406
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5923406 A
TITLE: Personal postage stamp vending machine
DATE-ISSUED: July 13, 1999
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	ZIPCODE	COUNTRY
Brasington; Glynn M.	Yokohama	N/A	N/A	JP
Pintsov; Leon A.	West Hartford	CT	N/A	N/A
Shapiro; Steven J.	Monroe	CT	N/A	N/A

US-CL-CURRENT: 355/40, 355/27

ABSTRACT: A vending machine system for printing postage stamps, the vending machine system includes an enclosed housing having a front panel with an aperture therein; a camera, mounted in the housing, for receiving through the aperture an image of at least one person and for creating an electronic image of the at least one person based on the received image of the at least one person; a printer; a payment receiving device for accepting payment and for providing a payment signal indicative that payment has been made; a computer including a memory, the computer 1) causing the camera to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image.

6 Claims, 9 Drawing figures
Exemplary Claim Number: 5
Number of Drawing Sheets: 6

---------- KWIC ---------

Abstract Text - ABTX (1): A vending machine system for printing postage stamps, the vending machine system includes an enclosed housing having a front panel with an aperture therein; a camera, mounted in the housing, for receiving through the aperture an image of at least one person and for creating an electronic image of the at least one person based on the received image of the at least one person; a printer; a payment receiving device for accepting payment and for providing a payment signal indicative that payment has been made; a computer including a memory, the computer 1) causing the camera to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image.

TITLE - TI (1): Personal postage stamp vending machine

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (2): The present invention relates to vending machines and, in particular, to vending machines providing personalized postage stamps.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (4): Despite the fact that commemorative/special edition stamps are known, personalized postage stamps are not available. That is, it would be desirable to permit a consumer to obtain a postage stamp which can be personally customized in appearance by the consumer. This type of personalized stamp would likely be well received by the general public and a premium could be charged for such a stamp to create additional revenue for the postal service.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (5): A particular form of personalizing a postage stamp which has heretofore never been accomplished would be to provide a postage stamp which included a picture of the individual sending the mailpiece. The postage stamp including the individual's picture could be created at any one of a plurality of independent kiosk/vending machines as will be discussed in more detail in connection with the invention described herein. Thus, the inventive concept set forth in this application provides for the creation of personalized postage stamps anywhere a kiosk/vending machine is installed. The kiosk/vending machine would have a digital camera incorporated therein to take the individual's picture so that the digital image can be combined with a standard postage stamp image thereby creating the personalized postage stamp. One problem in connection with this type of personalized stamp is that the photo which is taken must produce a good image of the individual or else consumers will quickly become dissatisfied if they have to pay for a poor quality image. Potential solutions to this problem are discussed in connection with the preferred embodiment of the invention.

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (6): It is also desirable to provide as part of the printed personalized postage stamp additional information about the contents of the envelope. That is, it would be desirable to provide a mechanism in the personalized postage stamp itself which would, at a subliminal level, indicate to the user the nature of the contents of the mailpiece. For example, it would be desirable for the postage stamp to provide an indication as to whether the contents of the envelope were of a serious nature (i.e. business related), a happy nature (invitation, birth announcement), or of a very sad nature (death notice, bill).

Brief Summary Text - BSTX (8): An object of the invention is to provide a vending machine system capable of printing personalized postage stamps including a picture of an individual. This object is met by providing a vending machine system for printing postage stamps, the vending machine system includes an enclosed housing having a front panel with an aperture therein; a camera, mounted in the housing, for receiving through the aperture an image of at least one person and for creating an electronic image of the at least one person based on the received image of the at least one person; a printer; a payment receiving device for accepting payment and for providing a payment signal indicative that payment has been made; a computer including a memory, the computer 1) causing the camera to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image.

Drawing Description Text - DRTX (3): FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the inventive personal postage stamp vending machine;

Detailed Description Text - DETX (2): FIG. 1 shows a vending machine 1 which is capable of printing personalized postage stamps 2 (as shown for example in FIGS. 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Vending machine 1 can be located anywhere such as in convenience stores, malls, etc. so that any consumer can simply walk up to the vending machine 1 to obtain one or a plurality of personalized postage stamps 2. Vending machine 1 includes a base portion 3 which supports an upper enclosed portion 5 within which all of the operating components of vending machine 1 are securely housed. Vending machine 1, although not shown, can itself be disposed in a conventional photo booth for the purpose of creating a quality photographic environment. Such photo booths are commonly known in the art and no further detailed discussion is considered warranted for the purpose of understanding the claimed invention. Vending machine 1 includes a front panel 7 having an aperture 9 therein behind which the lens 11 of a digital camera 13 (see FIG. 2) is disposed. Front panel 7 also includes a display 15 via which information is conveyed to a user of vending machine 1 and also in which the digitally created image made by camera 13 can be displayed.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (3): A user of vending machine 1 provides input concerning the desired personalized postage stamp 2 via a keyboard 17. Moreover, in a preferred embodiment, the vending machine 1 includes a smart card reader 19, a magnetic strip card reader 21, a paper money reader 23 and a coin accounting device 25. Smart card reader 19, magnetic strip card reader 21, paper money reader 23, and coin accounting device 25 are conventionally known structures and the function of each in connection with the inventive vending machine is discussed hereinbelow in connection with FIG. 2. Additionally, vending machine 1 includes a telephone/power line 27 which functions to provide power to the vending machine 1 and to permit vending machine 1 to communicate with external devices as discussed in more detail below. Furthermore, slot 29 is also provided in front panel 7 to receive mailpieces therein.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (5): In operation, a consumer presses a designated one of the individual buttons on keypad 17 to commence a transaction for printing a desired quantity of personalized postage stamps 2. Microcontroller 31 then displays information back to the user via display 15, such as providing a menu of personal postage stamp options or requesting which type of payment the consumer will be using to pay for the personal postage stamps to be printed. Responses to the inquiry from microcontroller 31 will be given by the consumer via the keyboard 17. Thus, for example, if the consumer wishes to pay for the personalized postage stamp 2 utilizing a conventional magnetic strip credit card 45, and such an indication is provided to the microcontroller 31, the microcontroller 31 advises the user via the display 15 to insert the credit card into the magnetic strip card reader 21. Upon insertion of the magnetic strip card 45 into the reader 21, the microprocessor 31 receives the identifying account information encoded in the magnetic strip card 45 and, via modem 37, either connects directly to a credit card data center 47 (as shown by the dotted line in FIG. 4) or alternatively communicates with the credit card data center 47 via a postage transaction data center 49. In either situation, the credit card data center 47 either verifies that the transaction is acceptable (i.e. credit card is valid) or sends a signal back to the microprocessor 31 denying use of the credit card. In the event that use is denied microprocessor 31 will send a message on display 15 advising the user that the transaction cannot be completed. In the event however, that the credit card check is satisfactory, the microcomputer 31 then requests the user to enter via the keyboard 17 the desired postage transaction. The user can then identify that they wish to have one or a plurality of personalized postage stamps 2 printed and enter such information via the keyboard 17. The microprocessor 31 will then control the display 15 to advise the consumer to position themselves in front of the lens 11 as is conventionally done in a photo booth by providing an adjustable seat so that the individuals eyes are approximately level with the lens 11. Once positioned, the digital camera 13 will take one or a plurality of pictures of the individual and will digitize the image(s) of the individual in a bit map format and store the digital image(s) in memory 35. Microcontroller 31 will then utilize the stored images in memory 35 and display to the consumer each of the different pictures taken via the display 15. The user can then select the picture which he likes best by entering a number associated with each of the displayed pictures via the keyboard 17. Once the user has selected the picture(s) which they prefer, the microprocessor 31 takes the selected digital image from memory 35 and drives a color ink jet printer 39 to produce the desired number of individual personalized postage stamps 2 on individual labels supplied by label supply reel 41 or alternatively, on a mailpiece which has been inserted into mailpiece slot 29.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (6): Referring to FIG. 3, the structure for moving ink jet printer 39 within top portion 5 of vending machine 1 in order to print on the various recording medium is schematically shown. That is, a motor 51 is connected to a driven pulley 53. A continuous belt 55 is disposed around the driven pulley 53 and an idler pulley 57. The printer 39 is fixedly connected to the belt 55. Accordingly, when motor 51 is energized by microcontroller 31 to drive pulley 53, the printer 39 moves in a reciprocating manner between a conventional maintenance station 59 where printhead maintenance is accomplished and a mailpiece print station 61 and a label print station 63. Since the motor 51 is a bidirectional motor, reciprocating movement can be accomplished. The above structure for moving the printhead between the various stations is commonly known in the art and is shown, for example, in U.S. Pat. No. 5,467,709. Thus, as previously discussed, if a mailpiece is inserted into mail slot 29 the end of the inserted mailpiece will contact a switch 65 which in turn provides a signal to the microprocessor 31 which is indicative that the medium to be printed on is the inserted mailpiece. Microcontroller 31, in a conventional manner, controls the firing of the individual nozzles of the ink jet printer 39 relative to the movement of the printer 39 between the maintenance station 59, the mailpiece print station 61 and the label print station 63, based on a position input received from an encoder 67 operatively connected to the motor 51. The signals from the encoder 67 permit the microcontroller 31 to know the exact position of the printer 39. Thus, when the switch 65 indicates that the selected number of personalized postage stamps 2 should be printed on the mailpiece, the printer 39 will begin printing on the mailpiece when it is moving across the letter print station 61. Alternatively, if no mailpiece has been inserted into the slot 29 such that a signal is not received by the microcontroller 31 from the switch 65, the microcontroller 31 automatically assumes that individual personalized stamps 2 should be printed on individual labels which are provided from a label supply spool 41. The label supply spool 41 is operated in a conventional manner by a motor (not shown) to provide either gummed labels or adhesive backed labels to the label print station 63 in order for the printer 39 to print the personalized postage stamps 2 thereon. A representative example of a label supply spool is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 5,390,594 which is hereby incorporated by reference. The motor (not shown) associated with the label supply spool 41 is controlled by the microprocessor 31. It should thus be readily apparent from the description given above to one possessing ordinary skill in the art that the microcontroller 31 controls the firing of the inkjet printer 39 to print any number of personalized postage stamps 2 on either an inserted mailpiece or on individual labels provided by the label supply spool 41.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (7): The personalized postage stamp 2 is shown in FIG. 5. The inkjet printer 39 under the control of the microcontroller 31, prints an image 69 of the consumer which was taken by the digital camera 13 and selected by the consumer as discussed above. The image 69 is printed in conjunction with other conventional postage stamp data required by the postal authority to create the personalized postage stamp 2. The other information included in the postage stamp includes a vendor/kiosk machine number 71, a post office identifying number 73, an amount of postage 75, and a date and place of origin circle 77. Additionally, the personalized postage stamp 2 includes a piece count 79 can be included on the stamp to identify how many stamps have been issued by the vending machine 1, a vendor identification number 81 to identify the manufacturer of the vending machine 1 and encrypted vendor and digital tokens 83, 85. Moreover, in order to ensure that the printed information has been correctly printed a number of check digits 87, 89 can also be printed as part of the indicia. The postal and vendor tokens 85, 83 are used as a means for verifying the authenticity of the printed personalized postage stamp 2 to provide the postal authority with the capability of detecting fraudulently produced stamps. The use of such tokens in a postage metering environment is known within the art such that a detailed discussion is not considered warranted. However, it is important to note that the tokens 83, 85 are produced at least partially based on certain information contained within the personalized postage stamp 2 including the piece count 79 and the vending machine serial number 71 such that each printed personalized postage stamp 2 will have a unique set of tokens associated therewith. The programming, algorithms and keys for generating the digital tokens 83, 85 are stored in memory 35. Additionally the postage stamp image generation engine is included as part of the microprocessor 31. Details of the image generation engine are described in copending application Ser. No. 08/554,179 entitled MAIL HANDLING APPARATUS AND PROCESS FOR PRINTING AN IMAGE COLUMN-BY-COLUMN IN REAL TIME and file Nov. 6, 1995 and which is hereby incorporated by reference.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (8): FIG. 4 shows a system to ensure that all of the funds collected by individual vending machines 1 are collected by the postal authority. That is, each individual vending machine 1 is operatively connected to the postage transaction data center 49 via its modem 37. Accordingly, when each individual personal postage stamp transaction takes place in a vending machine 1 the status of that transaction is stored in memory 35. For example, the number of personalized postage stamps 2 printed and the dollar value associated with each of those stamps for each transaction can be stored in memory 35. Alternatively, a running total of the number of postage stamps 2 printed and the total dollar value associated with that total number can be stored in memory 35. The data center 49 can, for example, on a nightly basis poll each of the individual vending machines 1 to obtain the total number of stamps 2 printed and the associated postage associated with those stamps for that specific day. The owners of the individual vending machines 1 would have prepaid accounts set up at the data center 49 such that a predetermined percentage of the revenue taken in by each of the vending machines 1 is automatically deducted from the individual accounts at the data center 49 and sent electronically to the postal authority 91. Once the daily upload of data from each of the vending machines 1 to the data center 49 has been accomplished, the registers in memory 35 of each individual vending machine 1 can be reset to zero.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (9): In an alternative embodiment, each of the vending machines 1 can have stored in memory 35 a conventional postage accounting module. The postage accounting module is capable of having downloaded therein in a conventional manner from data center 49 a predetermined amount of postage. Thus, an owner of the vending machine 1 prepays an account at the data center 49 and then requests that the predetermined amount of postage funds be downloaded into the accounting module of the vending machine 1. This capability provides some type of control over misuse of the vending machine 1 in that once the downloaded amount of postage funds has been exhausted, the further printing of additional personalized postage stamps 2 is precluded. In operation, the vending machine 1 for each user transaction determines if sufficient funds are available in the accounting module to complete the printing of the desired number of personalized postage stamps 2 at the desired value. If sufficient funds are available, microprocessor 31 decrements the amount of postage to be dispensed from a descending register of the accounting module, adds the amount to an ascending register of the accounting module, and permits printing of the desired number of personalized postage stamps 2. The accounting module therefore manages the amount of funds within the vending machine 1 with the ascending register representing the lifetime amount of postage funds spent, the descending register representing the amount of funds currently available, and a control sum register showing the running total amount of funds which have been credited to the vault from the data center 49. In this embodiment, microprocessor 31 can still, on a daily basis, upload to the data center 49 the daily transaction associated with the issuing of personalized postage stamps 2. Moreover, memory 35 can have programming installed therein that disables operation of vending machine 1 in the event that vending machine 1 does not on a daily basis interface with the data center 49 to provide the daily accounting data. Furthermore, data center 49 during the daily accounting transaction process can query the individual registers of the vending machine 1 thereby accomplishing a remote inspection to determine if any tampering of the registers has occurred.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (10): Returning to FIG. 2, a smart card 93 can be used in lieu of the magnetic strip credit card 45 for payment purposes. Smart card 93, as known in the art, has an embedded microprocessor and associated memory therein which, when placed in smart card reader 19, communicates with microprocessor 31 via bus 33. Smart card 93 has stored in a portion of its memory prepaid postage funds. These smart cards 93 would be purchased from the postal authority. When they are inserted into the smart card reader 19, microprocessor 31 queries the smart card 93 to determine if it has enough funds to pay for the desired amount of personalized postage stamps 2 being procured. If the answer is yes, the transaction is completed as discussed above in connection with the magnetic strip card 45 except that the funds in the smart card 93 are decremented by the postage amount and no postal accounting at data center 49 occurs. Moreover, memory 35 can be partitioned such that accounting data for smart card 93 transactions are kept separate from the magnetic strip card 45 transactions and any money payment transactions to be discussed below. Thus, even though the postal authority has already received its postage payment when the smart card 93 was procured, the storage of smart card 93 usage data permits accountability for all personalized postage stamps 2 printed by each vending machine 1 and also provides a vehicle for the postal authority to track the use of each smart card 93. That is, each smart card 93 is given a unique serial number which is provided to microprocessor 31 during each transaction. This information is then provided to the postal authority via communication with data center 49 as previously discussed.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (11): A third alternative for payment is that each vending machine 1 will accept paper money which is put into paper money reader 23 and coins 97 which are put into coin accounting device 97. Upon the deposit of the required funds, the printing of personalized postage stamps 2 and the accounting between the vending machine 1 and the data center 49 is the same as discussed above in connection with the magnetic strip card 45. Thus, in the preferred embodiment, three methods of payment for the personalized postage stamps are possible. However, vending machines 1 can also be implemented with only some of the payment capabilities discussed above.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (12): In yet another embodiment, the processing/memory capabilities of the smart card 93 can be effectively utilized to store digitally created photographic images of individuals which can then be downloaded into memory 35 of vending machine 1 and printed out as part of the personalized postage stamp 2. This provides consumers with a great deal of flexibility in that if they have a particularly good picture taken it can be stored and used over and over again.

Moreover, the picture taken in the picture booth is typically limited to a photo of the person's head and upper body. Use of the smart card will permit full body images to be printed as well as complete family photos. Additionally a plurality of digital images can be stored on the smart card 93 such as for each member of a family or even a complete family photo. Thus, when the smart card 93 is inserted into smart card reader 19, the microprocessor 31 will determine if digital images are stored in smart card 93 and, via the display 15, will query the user as to whether any of the stored images are to be used as part of the personalized postage stamp 2. If the answer is yes, that image is used. Otherwise, the vending machine 1 will take a new photo as discussed above. Moreover, in the event that the image taken by camera 13 is very good, it can be downloaded via the computer 1 to the smart card 93 for subsequent use.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (13): FIGS. 5, 6, and 7 each show a personalized postage stamp 2 which is produced by vending machine 1. The images are almost identical except that the expression of the individual in each of the personalized stamps 2 is different. In FIG. 5 the individual has a very serious expression while in FIG. 6 the expression is one of happiness. In FIG. 8 the expression is one of sadness. A unique concept of the instant invention is that each image provides a subliminal message to the recipient of the mailpiece as to the nature of the contents of the mailpiece. The expression of FIG. 5 suggests the contents are of a serious nature such as a business related issue whereas the expression of FIG. 6 suggests the contents relate to happy information such as that contained in a birth announcement or wedding invitation. The sad expression of FIG. 7 suggests that the contents include such items as a death notice or even possibly a bill. The key point is that vending machine 1 can print personalized postage stamps 2 which convey a subliminal message to the recipient about the contents of the mailpiece.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (14): FIG. 8 shows a sheet 97 of personalized postage stamps 2 which can be obtained from vending machine 1 when the printing label supply spool 41 is used. Similarly FIG. 9 shows a personalized postage stamp 2 which has been printed directly on an envelope 98.

Detailed Description Text - DETX (15): It is important to note that although the above-described preferred embodiment discusses the use of a combination of digital camera/ink jet printer technology, other known photographic/copier imaging techniques can be used for producing the personalized postage stamp 2 in lieu thereof. For example, conventional camera color photography technology can be used to print a more conventional photograph of the individual with the predetermined postal data superimposed in the photograph. This technology is known such as when cameras print as part of the photograph, the date of the picture taken. Additionally, color type copier imaging technology can also be utilized to produce the personalized postage stamp. Thus, the use of the term "printer" in the claims is broadly defined herein to encompass ink jet printing, conventional photographic imaging and copier imaging techniques. Moreover, while the use of a digital camera is shown, a conventional camera can be used in lieu thereof where standard photographic techniques are used to produce the personalized postage stamp 2.

Claims Text - CLTX (6): a computer including a memory and program means for 1) causing the camera means to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image;

Claims Text - CLTX (9): wherein at times when the smart card is inserted into the smart card reader the computer interfaces with the smart card reader to obtain the digital image of the at least one person from the smart card and utilizes the digital image of the at least one person in lieu of the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a second personalized postage stamp on the recording medium in lieu of the first personalized postage stamp, the second personalized postage stamp including the predetermined data and a picture of the at least one person based on the digital image.

Claims Text - CLTX (10): 2. A vending machine as recited in claim 1, wherein the picture of the at least one person based on the digital image includes a predetermined facial expression which provides a message to a recipient about a contents of a mailpiece having the second personalized postage stamp attached thereto.

Claims Text - CLTX (11): 3. A vending machine system as recited in claim 1, further comprising a display and a keyboard each mounted in the front panel and operatively connected to the computer, and wherein the smart card has stored therein a plurality of different digital images of the at least one person and the memory of the computer has program means stored therein which allow the computer to obtain each of the plurality of different digital images stored in the smart card and to display the plurality of images on the display such that a preferred one of the plurality of digital images is selectable via the keyboard and in response to such selection the computer controls the printer to print a third personalized postage stamp on the recording medium in lieu of the second personalized postage stamp, the third personalized postage stamp including the predetermined data and a picture of the at least one person based on the selected digital image.

Claims Text - CLTX (18): a computer including a memory and program means for 1) causing the camera means to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image; and

Claims Text - CLTX (19): means for selecting from a plurality of different recording medium the recording medium upon which the first personalized postage stamp is printed;

Claims Text - CLTX (21): wherein the selecting means includes a mailpiece slot in the front panel and a switch disposed in the mailpiece slot, and wherein at times when a mailpiece is inserted into the mailpiece slot and contacts the switch the first personalized postage stamp is printed on the mailpiece and at times when no mailpiece is inserted in the mailpiece slot the first personalized postage stamp is printed on the labels.

Claims Text - CLTX (27): a computer including a memory and program means for 1) causing the camera means to create the electronic image of the at least one person upon receipt of the payment signal, 2) saving the electronic image of the at least one person in the memory, and 3) utilizing the electronic image of the at least one person for controlling the printer to print a first personalized postage stamp on a recording medium, the first personalized postage stamp including predetermined data required by a postal authority and a picture of the at least one person based on the stored electronic image, and

Claims Text - CLTX (28): a data center remotely located from the computer and means for establishing communication between the data center and the computer such that the computer transmits to the data center via the communication means data associated with the printing of the first personalized postage stamp by the printer;

Claims Text - CLTX (29): wherein the transmitted data includes accounting data and quantity of first personalized postage stamps printed;

Claims Text - CLTX (30): wherein the computer transmits the data to the data center on a daily basis and further comprising program means in the memory which disables the vending machine system from printing the first personalized postage stamp in the event that the daily transmission of data does not occur.

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ABSTRACT: A sheet of (preferably twenty) personalized postage stamps may be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones. Each individual stamp will include the country of issue (e.g. U.S.A.) and a monetary value (e.g. 33.cent. or 55.cent.). The sheet of personalized stamps may contain a seal showing collectability value or proof of authentication. There is a method of retrieving an the personalized image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet. The consumer may request the operator of the computer system to apply a protective coating to protective the life of the stamp. In addition, the consumer may request that the finished product be framed as a picture.

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Abstract Paragraph - ABTX (1): A sheet of (preferably twenty) personalized postage stamps may be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones. Each individual stamp will include the country of issue (e.g. U.S.A.) and a monetary value (e.g. 33.cent. or 55.cent.). The sheet of personalized stamps may contain a seal showing collectability value or proof of authentication. There is a method of retrieving an the personalized image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet. The consumer may request the operator of the computer system to apply a protective coating to protective the life of the stamp. In addition, the consumer may request that the finished product be framed as a picture.

Title - TTL (1): Personalized postage stamps

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (8): [0007] In many cases the postal service will not endorse novel ideas in stamp alterations. One reason would be the lack of governmental control over how the stamps themselves are altered. If any personalized image can be placed on a stamp without some form of regulation, there could possibly be a problem with obscenity, copyright, and trademark issues. U.S. Pat. No. 5,873,605, issued to Kenneth Kaplan on February 23, describes a method for making personalized postage stamps. A consumer must first pose in front of a vending machine, similar to a passport photo machine in the shopping malls. The first region is the lawful stamp and may be printed by the vending machine. The first region occupies an outer margin of the stamp and surrounds a second region. The second region presents the image in the form of a person when the stamp is purchase from the vending machine. The vending machine then forms the first and second region images in a single operation at different times by different operations. The problem with this patent is that the invention limits the image to a person or photographable object, due to the fact that the subject being photographed must pose or be positioned in front of the vending machine.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (9): [0008] An ideal personalized postage stamp would permit the consumer to bring in any image or photo of their choice to be placed within the border of each postage stamp. Thus the size of the image will not be strictly limited to a person's face. In addition, there would be a regulating process which would prevent obscene photos, and copyright and trademark infringement problems, before the image is placed on the personalized postage stamps.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (10): [0009] None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singularly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed. Thus a personalized postage stamps solving the aforementioned problems is desired.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (12): [0010] The present invention provides a means to combine a personalized image with postage stamps to be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones. In particular, sheets of prefabricated postage stamps are provided by the post office to authorized dealers that includes spaces for a personalized image to be printed or copied thereon. A sheet of twenty personalized postage stamps has a back and front layer. The back layer comprises an inner surface which has a coating or laminate that permits another layer to be easily peeled away, generally known by the term "crack and peel." The front layer has a print side and an adhesive side. The adhesive side contains a pressure-sensitive or acrylic adhesive or cohesive which requires no moistening for activation for attaching the stamp to a carrier. Each individual stamp will include the country of issue (e.g. U.S.A.) and a monetary value (e.g. 33.cent. or 55.cent.).

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (14): [0012] The present invention also provides a method of retrieving an image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet. The method of making a personalized postage stamp includes the following steps: scanning and/or retrieving an image into storage from either a remote or local storage medium; storing the image in a data base; selecting a substrate for which the image is to be added; sizing the retrieved image to fit the selected substrate; applying the image(s) to the selected substrate; evaluating the combined substrate and image product; and optionally applying a protective coating onto the printed side of the final product and/or framing the finished product.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (15): [0013] In making a personalized postage stamp the consumer must provide a personalized image to an authorized dealer who operates a computer system designed to retrieve images. The consumer may supply the authorized dealer with an image sent via the email as an attachment file or the dealer may use an image off of a web site from the Internet. The consumer may bring in an image stored on a diskette or CD which can be retrieved as an image file and stored in the image data base. The final steps are optional to the consumer. The consumer may request the operator of the computer system to apply a protective coating to prolong the life of the stamp. In addition, the consumer may request that the finished product be framed as a picture.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (17): [0015] Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provides a means to combine a personalized image with postage stamps to be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (18): [0016] It is another object of the invention to provide a type of personalized postage stamps that attracts the philatelists and non-philatelists.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (19): [0017] It is a further object of the invention to provide a regulating process which prevents obscene photos, copyright and trademark infringement problems before the image is placed on the personalized postage stamps.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (2): [0021] FIG. 1 is an environmental, perspective view of a sheet of personalized postage stamps according to the present invention.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (3): [0022] FIG. 2 is a partially exploded, perspective view of a sheet of personalized postage stamps according to the present invention.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (4): [0023] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the method of making a personalized postage stamp according to the present invention.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (3): [0025] The present invention provides a means to combine a personalized image with postage stamps. A sheet of such stamps is designated as 10 in the drawings. FIG. 1 shows a sheet of personalized postage stamps 10 with a seal 20 containing indicia 22. In addition, the present invention includes a method of retrieving an image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (4): [0026] FIG. 2 shows a sheet of personalized stamps 10 comprising a back 24 and front 26 layer. The sheet of personalized postage stamps 10 is made from paper or synthetic material. The back layer 24 comprises an inner 28 and outer 30 surface. The inner surface 28 of the back layer 24 preferably has a coating or laminate that permits another layer to be easily peeled away. The front layer 26 comprises a print side 32 thereon characterizing the stamp(s) and an adhesive side 34 which adheres to a substrate. The adhesive side 34 of the front layer 26 contains a pressure-sensitive or acrylic adhesive or cohesive which requires no moistening for activation for attaching the stamp to a carrier substrate.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (8): [0030] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a method of making a personalized postage stamp which comprises the following steps: scanning 102 and/or retrieving an image 104 into storage from either a remote 106 or local storage medium 108; storing the image in a data base 110; selecting a substrate 112 for which the image is to be added; sizing the retrieved image to fit the selected substrate 114; applying the image(s) to the selected substrate 116; evaluating the combined substrate and image product 118; and optionally applying a protective coating 120 onto the printed side of the final product and/or framing the finished product 122. Steps 102, 104, 106, and 110 would all be processed by a conventional computer system 124 including a scanning device, a port that accepts diskettes and compact disks (CD's), and Internet access with email.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (9): [0031] The first step in making a personalized postage stamp 10 requires the consumer to provide a personalized image 44 to an authorized dealer who operates the computer system 124 designed to retrieve images 104. The retrieved images 104 can be done several ways. One way is for the consumer to personally present a photograph or image that can be scanned 102 and stored by the operator into the image data base 110 of the computer system 124.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (17): [0039] The present invention provides a means to combine a personalized image 44 with postage stamps 42 to be applied to pieces of mail. This type of personalized postage stamps 10 not only attracts the philatelists, but non-philatelists too.

Claims Text - CLTX (2): 1. A personalized postage stamp system comprising: a plurality of sheets, said sheets having an inner and outer surface, at least one said sheet having a print side and an adhesive side, said print side having a plurality of major definitive portions, said adhesive side being suited to adhere to a carrier substrate; and at least one personalized postage stamp on said print side having a border and a minor image-bearing portion, said minor image bearing portion being dimensioned and configured to enclose a said major definitive portion.

Claims Text - CLTX (3): 2. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said major definitive portion is said border of each stamp on said print side of said layer.

Claims Text - CLTX (4): 3. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 2, wherein said major definitive portion has a shape selected from the group consisting of portrait and landscape.

Claims Text - CLTX (5): 4. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 2, wherein said major definitive portion contains printed indicia designating a monetary value and a country of origin.

Claims Text - CLTX (6): 5. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said minor image-bearing portion on said print side is dimensioned and configured to receive a personalized image supplied by a consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (7): 6. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said personalized postage stamp further comprises a security and cancellation feature.

Claims Text - CLTX (8): 7. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said personalized postage stamp further comprises a destination code.

Claims Text - CLTX (9): 8. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said print side of said layer further comprises a seal having printed indicia.

Claims Text - CLTX (10): 9. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, further comprising a back sheet, said back sheet having an inner and outer surface, said inner surface is lined with a material permitting another said layer having a said adhesive side to be easily peeled away.

Claims Text - CLTX (11): 10. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 9, wherein said adhesive side further comprises a pressure-sensitive adhesive.

Claims Text - CLTX (12): 11. A method of making personalized postage stamps comprising the steps of: (a) scanning an image into storage; (b) retrieving an image from storage, said storage being selected from the group consisting of a local storage medium and al remote storage medium: (c) storing the image in a data base; (d) selecting a substrate to which the retrieved image will be added; (e) sizing the retrieved image to fit the selected substrate; (f) applying the image to the selected substrate; and (g) evaluating the combined substrate and final image product.

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US-CL-CURRENT: 705/401

ABSTRACT: Techniques for dispensing postage from a kiosk using a communications network. A method for obtaining a postage stamp at a kiosk, where the kiosk includes a computer system and a printer, includes, a user inputting into the kiosk a request for the postage stamp. The request is sent to a server via a communications network. The user then receives a markup language response back from the server. Next, the markup language response is processed to obtain an indicium. The indicium includes a digital signature. Lastly, the postage stamp is obtained by printing the indicium by the printer on a label, where the label includes one or more security features.

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Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (18): [0016] Another embodiment of the present invention provides an electronic kiosk for a user obtaining a postage stamp from a central server via a communications network, the electronic kiosk including: a display for receiving a user request for a stamp; a processor operating on software stored in a memory, the software including, an XML processor for reading an XML document including an indicium; a housing having the display, the processor, and the memory; network interface circuitry (NIC) connecting the processor to the communications network, the NIC for receiving the XML document; and a printer coupled to the memory for printing the stamp using the indicium.

Claims Text - CLTX (17): 16. An electronic kiosk for a user obtaining a postage stamp from a central server via a communications network, said electronic kiosk comprising: a processor operating on software stored in a memory, said software comprising a markup language processor for reading a markup language document comprising an indicium; a housing having said display, said processor, and said memory; network interface circuitry (NIC) connecting said processor to said communications network, said NIC for receiving said markup language document; and a printer coupled to said memory for printing said stamp using said indicium.

PGPUB-DOCUMENT-NUMBER: 20020093568
PGPUB-FILING-TYPE: new
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020093568 A1
TITLE: Postage and passport photo self-service kiosk
PUBLICATION-DATE: July 18, 2002
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	COUNTRY
Chumbley, Gregory R.	Fort Lauderdale	FL	US

US-CL-CURRENT: 348/207.99, 348/143

ABSTRACT: An apparatus for producing and printing a photograph includes a touch-screen CRT display, a currency receiving and dispensing device, a remote control device for adjusting location of a photo image area on the CRT display and controlling capture of a photo image of the user from a video camera lens and controller board, and a printer, all connected to a central processor. Video impressions viewed by the camera lens are converted into a series of electrical impulses which are selectively captured and digitized. Thereafter, a digitized photo image of the user is either combined with a stored postage meter image for printing by the printer to produce a printed picture on one side of an adhesive-backed postage meter strip, or, alternatively, uploaded by a high-speed modem to a host computer for processing a passport.

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Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (5): [0004] Postage stamps bearing the portrait of a famous person or historical site have long been an item of interest, especially to stamp collecting enthusiasts. The release by Federal Post Offices of stamps bearing the portraits of famous celebrities has heightened the general public's interest and demand for "special issue" stamps. In view of the public's infatuation with these novelty stamps, it is believed that many postage purchasers would find it exciting to have their personal photo on a stamp. However, the Federal Postal Regulations of most countries prohibit the application of a personal photograph, or other personal artistic expressions, to a stamp. On the other hand, it may be permissible to apply such a personal photo to a postage meter strip, wherein a printing device applies certain images representing a value of postage to a strip of adhesive backed paper or other suitable photographic medium.

PGPUB-DOCUMENT-NUMBER: 20020149195
PGPUB-FILING-TYPE: new
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20020149195 A1
TITLE: PERSONALIZED POSTAGE STAMPS
PUBLICATION-DATE: October 17, 2002
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	COUNTRY
BEASLEY, JOE PAT	SAN ANTONIO	TX	US

US-CL-CURRENT: 283/71

ABSTRACT: A sheet of (preferably twenty) personalized postage stamps may, be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones. Each individual stamp will include the country of issue (e.g. U.S.A.) and a monetary value (e.g. 33.cent. or 55.cent.). The sheet of personalized stamps may contain a seal showing collectability value or proof of authentication. There is a method of retrieving an the personalized image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet. The consumer may request the operator of the computer system to apply a protective coating to protective the life of the stamp. In addition, the consumer may request that the finished product be framed as a picture.

---------- KWIC ---------

Abstract Paragraph - ABTX (1): A sheet of (preferably twenty) personalized postage stamps may, be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones. Each individual stamp will include the country of issue (e.g. U.S.A.) and a monetary value (e.g. 33.cent. or 55.cent.). The sheet of personalized stamps may contain a seal showing collectability value or proof of authentication. There is a method of retrieving an the personalized image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet. The consumer may request the operator of the computer system to apply a protective coating to protective the life of the stamp. In addition, the consumer may request that the finished product be framed as a picture.

Title - TTL (1): PERSONALIZED POSTAGE STAMPS

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (8): [0007] In many cases the postal service will not endorse novel ideas in stamp alterations. One reason would be the lack of governmental control over how the stamps themselves are altered. If any personalized image can be placed on a stamp without some form of regulation, there could possibly be a problem with obscenity, copyright, and trademark issues. U.S. Pat. No. 5,873,605, issued to Kenneth Kaplan on February 23, describes a method for making, personalized postage stamps. A consumer must first pose in front of a vending machine, similar to a passport photo machine in the shopping malls. The first region is the lawful stamp and may be printed by the vending machine. The first region occupies an outer margin of the stamp and surrounds a second region. The second region presents the image in the form of a person when the stamp is purchase from the vending machine. The vending machine then forms the first and second region images in a single operation at different times by different operations. The problem with this patent is that the invention limits the image to a person or photographable object, due to the fact that the subject being photographed must pose or be positioned in front of the vending machine.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (9): [0008] An ideal personalized postage stamp would permit the consumer to bring in any image or photo of their choice to be placed within the border of each postage stamp. Thus the size of the image will not be strictly limited to a person's face. In addition, there would be a regulating process which would prevent obscene photos, and copyright and trademark infringement problems, before the image is placed on the personalized postage stamps.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (10): [0009] None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singularly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed. Thus a personalized postage stamps solving the aforementioned problems is desired.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (12): [0010] The present invention provides a means to combine a personalized image with postage stamps to be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones. In particular, sheets of prefabricated postage stamps are provided by the post office to authorized dealers that includes spaces for a personalized image to be printed or copied thereon. A sheet of twenty personalized postage stamps has a back and front layer. The back layer comprises an inner surface which has a coating or laminate that permits another layer to be easily peeled away, generally known by the term "crack and peel." The front layer has a print side and an adhesive side. The adhesive side contains a pressure-sensitive or acrylic adhesive or cohesive which requires no moistening for activation for attaching the stamp to a carrier. Each individual stamp will include the country of issue (e.g. U.S.A.) and a monetary value (e.g. 33.cent. or 55.cent.).

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (14): [0012] The present invention also provides a method of retrieving an image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet. The method of making a personalized postage stamp includes the following steps: scanning, and/or retrieving an image into storage from either a remote or local storage medium; storing the image in a data base; selecting a substrate for which the image is to be added; sizing the retrieved image to fit the selected substrate; applying the image(s) to the selected substrate; evaluating the combined substrate and image product; and optionally applying a protective coating onto the printed side of the final product and/or framing the finished product.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (15): [0013] In making a personalized postage stamp the consumer must provide a personalized image to an authorized dealer who operates a computer system designed to retrieve images. The consumer may supply the authorized dealer with an image sent via the email as an attachment file or the dealer may use an image off of a web site from the Internet. The consumer may bring in an image stored on a diskette or CD which can be retrieved as an image file and stored in the image data base. The final steps are optional to the consumer. The consumer may request the operator of the computer system to apply a protective coating to prolong the life of the stamp. In addition, the consumer may request that the finished product be framed as a picture.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (17): [0015] Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provides a means to combine a personalized image with postage stamps to be applied to pieces of mail or given as a gift to loved ones.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (18): [0016] It is another object of the invention to provide a type of personalized postage stamps that attracts the philatelists and non-philatelists.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (19): [0017] It is a further object of the invention to provide a regulating process which prevents obscene photos, copyright and trademark infringement problems before the image is placed on the personalized postage stamps.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (2): [0021] FIG. 1 is an environmental, perspective view of a sheet of personalized postage stamps according to the present invention.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (3): [0022] FIG. 2 is a partially exploded, perspective view of a sheet of personalized postage stamps according to the present invention.

Brief Description of Drawings Paragraph - DRTX (4): [0023] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the method of making a personalized postage stamp according to the present invention.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (2): [0025] The present invention provides a means to combine a personalized image with postage stamps. A sheet of such stamps is designated as 10 in the drawings. FIG. 1 shows a sheet of personalized postage stamps 10 with a seal 20 containing indicia 22. In addition, the present invention includes a method of retrieving an image and sizing the image before it is copied or printed onto the appropriate areas of the stamp sheet.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (3): [0026] FIG. 2 shows a sheet of personalized stamps 10 comprising a back 24 and front 26 layer. The sheet of personalized postage stamps 10 is made from paper or synthetic material. The back layer 24 comprises an inner 28 and outer 30 surface. The inner surface 28 of the back layer 24 preferably has a coating or laminate that permits another layer to be easily peeled away. The front layer 26 comprises a print side 32 thereon characterizing the stamp(s) and an adhesive side 34 which adheres to a substrate. The adhesive side 34 of the front layer 26 contains a pressure-sensitive or acrylic adhesive or cohesive which requires no moistening for activation for attaching the stamp to a carrier substrate.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (7): [0030] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a method of making a personalized postage stamp which comprises the following steps: scanning 102 and/or retrieving an image 104 into storage from either a remote 106 or local storage medium 108; storing the image in a data base 110; selecting a substrate 112 for which the image is to be added; sizing the retrieved image to fit the selected substrate 114; applying the image(s) to the selected substrate 116; evaluating the combined substrate and image product 118; and optionally applying a protective coating 120 onto the printed side of the final product and/or framing the finished product 122. Steps 102, 104, 106, and 110 would all be processed by a conventional computer system 124 including a scanning device, a port that accepts diskettes and compact disks (CD's), and Internet access with email.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (8): [0031] The first step in making a personalized postage stamp 10 requires the consumer to provide a personalized image 44 to an authorized dealer who operates the computer system 124 designed to retrieve images 104. The retrieved images 104 can be done several ways. One way is for the consumer to personally present a photograph or image that can be scanned 102 and stored by the operator into the image data base 110 of the computer system 124.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (16): [0039] The present invention provides a means to combine a personalized image 44 with postage stamps 42 to be applied to pieces of mail. This type of personalized postage stamps 10 not only attracts the philatelists, but non-philatelists too.

Claims Text - CLTX (2): 1. A personalized postage stamp system comprising: a plurality of sheets, said sheets having an inner and outer surface, at least one said sheet having a print side and an adhesive side, said print side having a plurality of major definitive portions, said adhesive side being suited to adhere to a carrier substrate; and at least one personalized postage stamp on said print side having a border and a minor image-bearing portion, said minor image bearing portion being dimensioned and configured to enclose a said major definitive portion.

Claims Text - CLTX (3): 2. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said major definitive portion is said border of each stamp on said print side of said layer.

Claims Text - CLTX (4): 3. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 2, wherein said major definitive portion has a shape selected from the group consisting of portrait and landscape.

Claims Text - CLTX (5): 4. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 2, wherein said major definitive portion contains printed indicia designating a monetary value and a country of origin.

Claims Text - CLTX (6): 5. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said minor image-bearing portion on said print side is dimensioned and configured to receive a personalized image supplied by a consumer.

Claims Text - CLTX (7): 6. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said personalized postage stamp further comprises a security and cancellation feature.

Claims Text - CLTX (8): 7. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said personalized postage stamp further comprises a destination code.

Claims Text - CLTX (9): 8. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, wherein said print side of said layer further comprises a seal having printed indicia.

Claims Text - CLTX (10): 9. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 1, further comprising a back sheet, said back sheet having an inner and outer surface, said inner surface is lined with a material permitting another said layer having a said adhesive side to be easily peeled away.

Claims Text - CLTX (11): 10. A personalized postage stamp system according to claim 9, wherein said adhesive side further comprises a pressure-sensitive adhesive.

Claims Text - CLTX (12): 11. A method of making personalized postage stamps comprising the steps of: (a) scanning an image into storage; (b) retrieving an image from storage, said storage being selected from the group consisting of a local storage medium and a remote storage medium: (c) storing the image in a data base; (d) selecting a substrate to which the retrieved image will be added; (e) sizing the retrieved image to fit the selected substrate; (f) applying the image to the selected substrate; and (g) evaluating the combined substrate and final image, product.

PGPUB-DOCUMENT-NUMBER: 20030140017
PGPUB-FILING-TYPE: new
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20030140017 A1
TITLE: System for customizing and ordering personalized postage stamps
PUBLICATION-DATE: July 24, 2003
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	COUNTRY	RULE-47
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Tsaur, Allen K.	Rochester	NY	US	

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/410, 705/408

ABSTRACT: A system and method for customizing and ordering an official postal product. The system includes a central authorizing computer system for communicating with at least one remote ordering system over a communication network. The central authorizing computer system having a computer program for forwarding information to the at least one remote ordering system for allowing customizing of an image for use in an official postal product from the at least one remote ordering system.

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Title - TTL (1): System for customizing and ordering personalized postage stamps

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (8): [0007] The Gravure process described above for printing stamps does not lend itself to economically printing small batches of stamps in small quantities, for example, batches from about of 10 to 1000. Thus, providing a system which uses a Gravure printing system would not be economically suitable in a system which permits a consumer to choose an image and having a relatively small number of postal products made using that image. A second problem is that not every personal image is suitable for use as a postage stamp. That is to say, some images might be offensive, not appropriate, or otherwise not acceptable.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (11): [0010] U.S. Pat. No. 5,819,240 discloses printing a postage meter stamp, including the postage amount and a personalized postage indicia, onto a piece of mail. The personalized postage indicia can be created by the user or selected from a list of graphics supplied by the Post Office and placed on a postal storage device. Also disclosed is the use of two compatible computer programs, one that runs on a computer at the Post Office and a second that runs on the user's computer. There are several problems with the system and method disclosed. The first is that the postage is printed using a postage meter, which limits the postage printed to indicia consisting of one-color. Again, as mentioned above, these indicia are typically very rudimentary and are no more than line drawings. Another problem is the system requires the use of a postage meter type printing device and/or a postage storage device. The postage storage device needs to be taken to the Post Office to be interfaced with the computer at the Post Office so the postal employee can add additional postage and graphics to the memory of the device. The postal employee also enables the user to access the postage and graphics at the user's location. Finally the personalized indicia is typically printed in close proximity to the postage indicia, but is not actually part of the postage itself.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (2): [0031] Referring now to FIG. 1, there is illustrated a system 10 for ordering customized postage via a central authorizing computer system 12 for communicating with at least one remote ordering system 14 over a communication network 16. The central authorizing computer system 12 includes a computer 18 having an appropriate means allowing the computer system 12 to forward information to a remote ordering system 14 and for allowing for the customizing of official postal products and/or for ordering of custom official postal products. For the purposes of the present invention, an "official postal product" means a product by itself, or as affixed to another product which shall be recognized as official postage which can be used to send items through the official governmental postal system. The remote ordering system 14 comprises a microprocessor 20 (such as a personal computer) having communication hardware 19 (such as a communication modem) and software and includes a display device 21 and appropriate data entry means 22 (such as a keyboard, mouse, etc.). In place of computer 20 an interactive TV device, kiosk 30 (FIG. 2), or other remote communication device may be used. The consumer accesses the central authorizing computer system 12 via the remote ordering system 14 at a consumer's location, for example, home, store, or business. Custom images that can be used by the remote computer system 14 for creating customized postal products, such as postage stamps 27, can be obtained from any desired source. For example, images can be obtained from image files stored in digital format on floppy and hard disks, Picture CDs, Photo CDs, and CD-ROMs, or can be a selection of images stored on the central authorizing computer system 12. Image files may also be downloaded from the Internet using a system such as Kodak's Photonet, or can be obtained from negatives and prints scanned using the consumer's own film or print scanner 24, or images from a digital camera (not shown). The consumer can also make a selection from images stored on the central authorizing computer system 12 that are made available to the consumer.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (8): [0037] A consumer using a remote ordering system 14, such as a personal computer or kiosk 30, logs onto the central authorizing computer system 12. In the embodiment illustrated, the central authorizing system 12 may be located at a governmental office (such as the official post office), or that of a designee. The ordering process starts with an introduction step 50 which results in introduction screen 51 (FIG. 4) being displayed on the remote display device 21 at the remote computer system 12. The introduction screen 51 explains what creating your own postal product is about. If the consumer wants more information, they select the "?" button 48 on screen 51 and the instruction screen 53 (FIG. 5) appears on the display device 21 and the system 12 leads the process to step 54. The instruction screen 53 explains how the consumer can create customized postage stamps or other postal products having custom images using one of their own images or selecting an image from a gallery of pre-approved images. The consumer then selects the "right arrow" 55 and the product list (step 56), which provides a product list screen 57 (see FIG. 6), which appears on display device 21. The product list screen 57 lists all the types of postage products the consumer can purchase with their customized image incorporated in the postal product. Postal products include, but are not limited to, postage stamps, envelopes, postcards, packages, etc. The consumer then selects the "right arrow" 55 and goes to Guidelines (step 58) where an image guideline screen 59 (FIG. 7) appears on the display device 21. The image guideline screen 59 displays a list of what is appropriate and not appropriate as image content for your personal image to be approved for use on a postal product. The user is then led back to the introduction screen 51 at step 50 by selection of return button 49 and then selects the "right arrow" 55 which takes the user to decision step 60 wherein a decision screen 61 (FIG. 8) appears on the display device 21. The decision screen 61 displays options for the consumer to choose. In the embodiment illustrated, there are two options, however, there may be any desired number of options. The first option is for the consumer to choose one of their own images (step 62) by selecting button 63. When the consumer selects the button 63, the chosen image source screen 65 (FIG. 9a) appears on the display device 21. The selected image source screen (FIG. 9a) displays three buttons 66,67,68. When the consumer selects the "From File" button 66, the consumer is taken to the part of their computer 18 where their files are stored, screen 65, so they can choose to open a file containing one of their images, as illustrated by FIG. 9b. When an image file is selected, it is displayed in the window 69 on the upload screen 71 (FIG. 10). When the consumer selects button 67, the consumer is asked for an external image source such as a flatbed scanner, digital camera, or other such source. When the image 69 is acquired, the image 69 is displayed on the screen 71. When the consumer is satisfied with the image selected, the consumer selects the "Upload" button 68 and the file of the selected image is uploaded (step 72) to authorizing computer system 12 and appears in the window 79 of the image manipulation screen 73 (FIG. 1 1). The process then goes to step 74. The window 79 may be any desired shape or size consistent with the postal product on which the image is to be placed and is sufficiently large so as to enable the user to view and manipulate the image as discussed later herein. At this point, the authorizing computer system 12 controls further action on the uploaded image.

PGPUB-DOCUMENT-NUMBER: 20040254898
PGPUB-FILING-TYPE: new
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20040254898 A1
TITLE: Vanity postage stamps and method
PUBLICATION-DATE: December 16, 2004
INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	COUNTRY	RULE-47
Parker, Peter	Keller	TX	US	
Mampe, John J.	Fort Worth	TX	US	

US-CL-CURRENT: 705/402

ABSTRACT: A method of providing a customer with postage stamps including images provided by the customer includes (a) receiving image data from a customer, (2) combining the image data with postal indicia to produce an electronic image of a postage stamp, (3) providing an image of a postage stamp including the image data received from the customer for customer review, (4) reviewing the image data for compliance with predetermined criteria, (5) printing the postage stamp, and (6) forwarding the printed stamps to the customer.

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Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (2): [0001] The invention relates to customized, vanity postage stamps and a method of creating the stamps.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (5): [0003] A number of methods have been proposed to enable vending machines to take a photo and then issue a personal postage stamp containing the image captured by the photograph with appropriate revenue controlled through the vending device. Such prior art attempts have not resulted in any marketable devices due to a number of process related limitations. A major limitation has been the lack of a review process to assure that postage stamps so issued meet the social norms of the relevant society in which the postage is printed. Additionally, security features and control of the stock upon which postage is printed have not been designed to meet the process integrity and security concerns of postal administrations.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (8): [0005] In the method of the invention, a postal customer would receive personalized postage stamps purchased through a postal agency (for example, the United States Postal Service) with artwork, graphics or pictures provided by the user. Customer provided clip art or photographs provide the means by which postage is personalized. This clip art is incorporated into an approved postage format and customer selected denomination. In accordance with the method, personalized postage can either be printed by the postal authority on preprinted stock at a central location or using a personal computer and printer with approved software. The postal agency (such as the USPS) could add a surcharge or separate fee to the postage to cover the expense and special handling involved in providing the personalized postage.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (9): [0006] In accordance with the invention, a system for printing postage stamps on stamp stock approved by a postal agency or its authorized representative includes means for receiving customer-provided image data in electronic form, computer-implemented means for incorporating the customer-provided image data into approved customized postage, a printer that prints the combined artwork and postage on the stamp stock, thereby creating a personalized postage stamp of a desired value; and means for receiving payment from a customer. In a preferred embodiment, the means for receiving customer-provided image data comprises a computer connected to a global computer network. In this respect, the means for receiving payment from a customer may be a secure computer communications link whereby a customer may pay for the postage via the secure link.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (5): [0016] As an alternative to ordering the vanity type postage stamps via the internet from a central, national printing facility or by visiting a local post office, appropriately equipped postage kiosks may be conveniently located at shopping centers, malls and similar locations. In this variation the customer could create his or her own customized postage stamps using his or her own pictures and or artwork. The customer would have the ability to scan the pictures or art work, size and crop the artwork and/or utilize special effects. The customer would have the option of formatting the stamp in a portrait format as shown in FIG. 1 or in a landscape format as shown in FIG. 2.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (9): [0020] In order to prevent fraud, the customized postage stamps would be printed on secure paper that contains features to assure that the postage is legal for the intended purpose. The paper stock could include special fibers, metallic strips or other secure features to protect against fraudulent copies. The secure paper may contain phosphorescent areas or other secure markings positioned behind the official area such as the "USA" display, the area displaying the revenue amount and/or on the margins of the stamp. The paper stock may either be preprinted with an amount field such as the displayed "USA," the amount of revenue, or the fields could be left blank. In either case, the paper would be considered a controlled stock item. The use of secure paper will assure that the stamps can be detected as valid postage by automated scanning and canceling equipment and/or easily verified by postal carriers and other personnel who would review mail for validity purposes.

Claims Text - CLTX (1): 1. A system for printing postage stamps on stamp stock approved by a postal agency or its authorized representative, comprising: means for receiving customer-provided image data in electronic form; computer-implemented means for incorporating the customer-provided image data into approved customized postage; a printer that prints the combined artwork and postage on the stamp stock, thereby creating a personalized postage stamp of a desired value; and means for receiving payment from a customer.

DIALOG 29 DECEMBER 2004

File 2:INSPEC 1969-2004/Dec W2 (c) 2004 Institution of Electrical Engineers
File 9:Business & Industry(R) Jul/1994-2004/Dec 28 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File 15:ABI/Inform(R) 1971-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 ProQuest Info&Learning
File 16:Gale Group PROMT(R) 1990-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File 20:Dialog Global Reporter 1997-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 The Dialog Corp.
File 35:Dissertation Abs Online 1861-2004/Dec (c) 2004 ProQuest Info&Learning
File 65:Inside Conferences 1993-2004/Dec W4 (c) 2004 BLDSC all rts. reserv.
File 99:Wilson Appl. Sci & Tech Abs 1983-2004/Nov (c) 2004 The HW Wilson Co.
File 148:Gale Group Trade & Industry DB 1976-2004/Dec 29 (c)2004 The Gale Group
File 160:Gale Group PROMT(R) 1972-1989 (c) 1999 The Gale Group
File 233:Internet & Personal Comp. Abs. 1981-2003/Sep (c) 2003 EBSCO Pub.
File 256:TecInfoSource 82-2004/Dec (c) 2004 Info.Sources Inc
File 275:Gale Group Computer DB(TM) 1983-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File 347:JAPIO Nov 1976-2004/Aug(Updated 041203) (c) 2004 JPO & JAPIO
File 348:EUROPEAN PATENTS 1978-2004/Dec W03 (c) 2004 European Patent Office
File 349:PCT FULLTEXT 1979-2002/UB=20041223,UT=20041216 (c) 2004 WIPO/Univentio
File 474:New York Times Abs 1969-2004/Dec 28 (c) 2004 The New York Times
File 475:Wall Street Journal Abs 1973-2004/Dec 28 (c) 2004 The New York Times
File 476:Financial Times Fulltext 1982-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 Financial Times Ltd
File 583:Gale Group Globalbase(TM) 1986-2002/Dec 13 (c) 2002 The Gale Group
File 610:Business Wire 1999-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 Business Wire.
File 613:PR Newswire 1999-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 PR Newswire Association Inc
File 621:Gale Group New Prod.Annou.(R) 1985-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File 624:McGraw-Hill Publications 1985-2004/Dec 28 (c) 2004 McGraw-Hill Co. Inc
File 634:San Jose Mercury Jun 1985-2004/Dec 28 (c) 2004 San Jose Mercury News
File 636:Gale Group Newsletter DB(TM) 1987-2004/Dec 29 (c) 2004 The Gale Group
File 810:Business Wire 1986-1999/Feb 28 (c) 1999 Business Wire
File 813:PR Newswire 1987-1999/Apr 30 (c) 1999 PR Newswire Association Inc

Set	Items	Description
S1	194593	(POSTAGE OR FRANK??? OR MAIL??? OR SHIPPING) (5N) (INDICIA OR INDICIUM OR MARK??? OR STAMP??? OR IMPRESSION?? OR IMPRINT?? OR SLOGAN?? OR INSCRIPTION??)
S2	5337	S1 (5N) (TEXT OR LOGO OR AD OR ADS OR ADVERTIS????? OR MESSAGE?? OR GRAPHIC??? OR GREETING??)
S3	2228	S1 (5N) (PICTURE?? OR IMAGE?? OR PHOTO?? OR PHOTOGRAPH??)
S4	6037	S1 (5N) (CUSTOM???????? OR PERSONAL????????)
S5	135	S2 (S) S3
S6	854051	(REMOTE OR REMOTELY OR CENTRAL OR CENTRALLY OR CENTER) (5N) (NET OR NETWORK OR LAN OR WAN OR INTERNET OR INTRANET OR COMMUNICATIONS OR LINE OR LINK OR CHANNEL)
S7	81	S1 (5N) S6
S8	15	(S4 OR S5) AND S7
S9	7	RD S8 (unique items) [Scanned ti,pd,kwic all]
S10	15	S4 AND S7
S11	8	S4 AND S5
S12	8	RD S11 (unique items) [Scanned ti,pd,kwic all]